

To: Brooks, Karl[brooks.karl@epa.gov]
From: Bryan, David
Sent: Thur 12/26/2013 9:03:57 PM
Subject: OPA Daily Digest for 12/26/13

OPA Daily Digest for 12/26/13

Congressional Inquiries:

None

State and Local Government Inquiries:

None

Press Inquiries:

Wall Street Journal – John Emshwiller – 12/26/13: Questions about correspondence between members of the National Remedy Review Board regarding the West Lake Landfill Site in Bridgeton, Mo. Contact: Chris Whitley, 7394 (closed)

Environmental Stories:

St. Louis Post-Dispatch - Companies to pay \$1.4 million to settle SE Missouri pollution claim - 12/24/13 - The owners of a former metals mining operation in southeastern Missouri have agreed to pay \$1.4 million to settle government claims related to alleged environmental damages.

http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/companies-to-pay-million-to-settle-se-missouri-pollution-claim/article_b1cb17f6-e16f-5984-a6cd-0266580c620b.html

Also St. Louis Business Journal

St. Louis Business Journal - Further declines expected in High Plains Aquifer - 12/26/13 -

Geologists who are preparing to measure water levels in the High Plains Aquifer in western Kansas are expecting further declines after a 3.25-foot drop last year.

http://www.bizjournals.com/wichita/morning_call/2013/12/further-declines-expected-in-high.html

Also Wichita Business Journal

Associated Press - Drop in High Plains aquifer expected again - 12/26/13 - Water levels in a vital western Kansas aquifer system have fallen drastically in recent years, and scientists who plan to take new readings this winter year don't expect things to be any different this time. - See more at:

<http://www.gctelegram.com/news/k5352-BC-KS-AquiferStudy-1stLd-Writethru-12-25-0703>

Lawrence Journal-World - Geologists to measure aquifer levels - 12/23/13 - Last year, when researchers from the Kansas Geological Survey traveled to western Kansas to measure groundwater levels in the High Plains Aquifer, they found those levels had dropped by an average of about three and a half feet. <http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2013/dec/23/evergreen-geologists-measure-aquifer-levels/>

Lawrence Journal-World - Editorial: Looking ahead | Ensuring a water supply for western Kansas may require some out-of-the-box thinking - 12/26/13 - Dramatic declines in groundwater levels have been recorded for the last two years in the High Plains Aquifer in western Kansas.

<http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2013/dec/26/editorial-looking-ahead/>

Associated Press - End of an era as smelter closes in Missouri town - 12/25/13 - From the day its founder arrived here, this Mississippi River town has been tied inseparably to lead, the heavy, dull-gray metal that has been mined in southern Missouri for more than two centuries.

<http://www.kansascity.com/2013/12/25/4712987/end-of-an-era-as-smelter-closes.html>

Mitchell County Press (Iowa) - Iowa Conservation Action Network launched - 12/25/13 - The Iowa Corn Growers Association, the Iowa Soybean Association and the Iowa Land Improvement Contractors Association have launched a private sector initiative to demonstrate technology-based conservation practice planning. http://globegazette.com/mcpress/news/local/iowa-conservation-action-network-launched/article_0f030c32-0a01-501b-8693-1e09ab46c7d0.html

Quad-City Times - State seeks funds for rural electric cooperatives - 12/24/13 - Gov. Terry Branstad says Iowa is appealing a federal decision to deny disaster aid to four rural electrical cooperatives.

http://qctimes.com/news/state-and-regional/iowa/state-seeks-funds-for-rural-electric-cooperatives/article_a6092035-9a23-54cb-afd6-9ea97d5d9ded.html

Des Moines Register - Iowa officials appeal FEMA denial of aid to rural electric cooperatives - 12/24/13 - State officials have submitted an appeal to the Federal Emergency Management Agency asking the agency to reconsider an earlier decision denying disaster relief funding to four rural electric cooperatives in northwest Iowa. <http://blogs.desmoinesregister.com/dmr/index.php/2013/12/24/iowa-officials-appeal-fema-denial-of-aid-to-rural-electric-cooperatives/>

Wichita Eagle - Joann Knight: Extend wind tax credit - 12/26/13 - With the proper policies in place, the Sunflower State has the opportunity to lead this American energy revolution. A multiyear extension of the PTC will allow Kansans to reap the benefits of a strong, dependable wind-power industry.

<http://www.kansas.com/2013/12/26/3195969/joann-knight-extend-wind-tax-credit.html>

Gasconade County Rural Republican (Mo.) - School demolition halted - 12/24/13 - A Harrisburg, Mo., demolition firm which bought the building and remaining contents of the old OES 3-5 Center for salvage rights has been cited by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources for five violations pertaining to asbestos removal. <http://www.gasconadecountyrepublican.com/news-mainmenu-45/owensville-mainmenu-29/7273-school-demolition-halted-.html>

Lake News Online (Mo.) - DNR grants water study funds - 12/26/13 - The Village of Sunrise Beach has received a grant from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources to study the extension of its water system to residential neighborhoods in and near the municipal boundaries. <http://www.lakenewsonline.com/article/20131225/NEWS/131229634/1001/NEWS>

New York Times - Start-Up Uses Plant Seeds for a Biofuel - 12/24/13 - In an unmarked greenhouse, leafy bushes carpet an acre of land here tucked into the suburban sprawl of Southern California. The seeds of the inedible, drought-resistant plants, called jatropha, produce a prize: high-quality oil that can be refined into low-carbon jet fuel or diesel fuel. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/25/business/energy-environment/start-up-makes-gains-turning-jatropha-bush-into-biofuel.html>

Los Angeles Times - EPA report on fracking in Texas raises new concerns - 12/24/13 - An inspector general's report says the EPA was justified in investigating claims of water contamination near a fracking site in Texas. <http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-epa-fracking-20131225,0,6042944.story>

Business Insider - The EPA Screwed Up When It Dropped This Fracking Investigation - 12/25/13 -

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was criticized in an internal report for dropping charges that Range Resources Corp was polluting drinking water while "fracking" for natural gas. <http://www.businessinsider.com/epa-criticized-for-dropping-fracking-investigation-2013-12>

Politico - Coal in their stockings - 12/24/13 - Coal-fired power plants are shutting their doors at a record pace — and for the most part, nobody's building new ones. The latest round in the war on coal? Not exactly. <http://www.politico.com/story/2013/12/coal-fired-power-plants-energy-efficiency-environmental-protection-agency-natural-gas-101488.html>

Environmental Science & Technology - Ford publishes study showing emissions benefits of mid-level ethanol blends - 12/24/13 - Ford has published a study showing that mid-level ethanol blends in a 2006 model year Mercury Grand flex fuel car showed significant emissions reductions compared to lower blends and that high blends didn't have much better performance than mid-level blends. <http://pubs.acs.org/doi/abs/10.1021/es404041v>

BusinessWire - Wood Pellet Exports from North America Have Steadily Increased over the Past Two Years - 12/23/13 - North American shipments of wood pellets over the Atlantic continued to go up in the 2Q/13 with volumes more than double those in the 2Q/11. <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20131222005036/en/Wood-Resources-International-LLC-Wood-Pellet-Exports>

Domestic Fuel - Biodiesel Conference to Discuss Challenges Ahead - 12/26/13 - The National Biodiesel Conference & Expo is less than a month away, and the CEO of the National Biodiesel Board stresses that they need as many people involved in biodiesel as possible to attend. <http://domesticfuel.com/2013/12/26/biodiesel-conference-to-discuss-challenges-ahead/>

Greenwire - EPA says it wants to review coal mine emissions but doesn't have time - 12/24/13 - In a federal appeals court filing yesterday, U.S. EPA said it wants to review whether to list coal mines as a pollution source under the Clean Air Act but doesn't have time. <http://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1059992288/>

Greenwire - Watchdogs, industry spar over storage analysis - 12/24/13 - A host of states and environmental, science-based and anti-nuclear groups want the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to throw out an industry-backed environmental analysis that found it's safe to store hot, radioactive waste at reactor sites across the country indefinitely. <http://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1059992292/>

Greenwire - Utilities move to monthly user fees to maintain infrastructure - 12/24/13 - Utility companies have started charging customers to connect to power lines in an attempt to offset losses from renewable energy production and a decline in U.S. power consumption. <http://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1059992284/>

Houston Business Journal - Fracking for gas uses less water than coal plants, study finds - 12/24/13 - A new University of Texas study suggests that the steam turbines on coal plants consume 25

to 50 times more water than is used in both gas extraction, or fracking, and the natural gas-powered generation. <http://www.bizjournals.com/houston/news/2013/12/24/fracking-for-gas-uses-less-water-than.html>

Bloomberg - EPA's Fracking Probe of Range Resources Met Rules, Review Says - 12/24/13 - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency followed legal requirements in issuing an emergency order against Range Resources Corp. (RRC) for water contamination in Texas, the agency's independent investigation arm said yesterday. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-12-24/epa-fracking-probe-of-range-resources-met-requirements-ig-says.html>

Associated Press - EPA Report Could Reopen Texas Water Contamination Case - 12/24/13 - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was justified in immediately barring residents in North Texas from using water contaminated with explosive methane and cancer-causing benzene., but more testing needs to be done. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/12/24/texas-water-contamination-case_n_4499466.html

New York Times - Wind Power Developers Race Clock to Secure Subsidy - 12/25/13 - The wind industry is hard at work on its own year-end tradition, rushing to make sure projects qualify for an important subsidy before it is set to vanish at the stroke of midnight on Tuesday. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/26/business/energy-environment/wind-power-developers-race-clock-to-secure-subsidy.html>

Quartz - Is frozen natural gas the future of energy? - 12/25/13 - Shale has the spotlight for now. But there's another, lesser-known substance with the potential to yield even greater quantities of natural gas: methane hydrate. Hydrates consist of a lattice-like structure of frozen water molecules and methane. <http://qz.com/161471/is-frozen-natural-gas-the-future-of-energy/>

Phys.Org - Environmental fiscal reform would improve the environment and reduce the informal economy - 12/26/13 - Measures to improve the environment and the efficiency of the tax system are proposed: CO2 emissions should be taxed and taxes on labor should be cut. <http://phys.org/news/2013-12-environmental-fiscal-reform-environment-economy.html>

Washington Times - Obama may be able to avoid environmental debate, Keystone pipeline decision - 12/25/13 - After five years of delays, it has become increasingly clear that President Obama doesn't want to make a decision on the massive Keystone XL oil sands pipeline. It turns out he may not have to. <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/dec/25/obama-may-be-able-to-wait-out-keystone-pipeline-de/>

Associated Press (Neb.) - Calhoun nuclear plant back in operation - 12/26/13 - The Fort Calhoun nuclear power plant in eastern Nebraska is back in operation after nearly three years of being shut down

under the heavy scrutiny of federal regulators. http://journalstar.com/ap/state/calhoun-nuclear-plant-back-in-operation/article_5fc33368-e692-5cb2-93f1-25c351978939.html

Inside EPA - Groundwater Study At Key Nuclear Site Raises Questions About EPA Plan - 12/25/13 -
New groundwater monitoring data from a high-profile Superfund site with radioactive contamination appears to show migration of the contamination, potentially giving weight to environmentalists' calls for a more comprehensive cleanup plan although EPA Region VII continues to emphasize the buried waste poses no current threat to public health and safety. <http://insideepa.com/Environmental-Policy-Alert/Environmental-Policy-Alert-12/25/2013/groundwater-study-at-key-nuclear-site-raises-questions-about-epa-plan/menu-id-132.html>

Inside EPA - New 'Sustainable' Business Alliance Weighs Joining TSCA Reform Talks - 12/25/13 -
A group of companies favoring use of safer alternatives to harmful substances has launched a new coalition aimed at pressing lawmakers to adopt stricter approaches for regulating industrial chemicals. <http://insideepa.com/Environmental-Policy-Alert/Environmental-Policy-Alert-12/25/2013/new-sustainable-business-alliance-weighs-joining-tsca-reform-talks/menu-id-132.html>

Inside EPA - EPA Moves To Settle DOD Challenge To Stormwater Retention Permits - 12/25/13 -
EPA and the Department of Defense (DOD) have stayed a pair of closely-watched stormwater permit appeals for settlement talks, raising the possibility that the cases could be dropped before a ruling. <http://insideepa.com/Environmental-Policy-Alert/Environmental-Policy-Alert-12/25/2013/epa-moves-to-settle-dod-challenge-to-stormwater-retention-permits/menu-id-132.html>

Inside EPA - EPA Sends SO2 Data Rule To OMB - 12/25/13 - EPA has sent for White House Office of Management & Budget (OMB) review a proposed rule that will detail requirements for state and local air agencies to meet in monitoring or modeling sulfur dioxide (SO2) emissions. <http://insideepa.com/201312242456654/EPA-Blog/The-Inside-Story/epa-sends-so2-data-rule-to-omb/menu-id-97.html>

Inside EPA - EPA Seeks Key Data For Lead Paint Cleanup Rule In Commercial Buildings - 12/25/13 -
EPA has hired a consultant to assess risks of lead exposure to adults and is seeking information from businesses on practices that could cause workplace exposures to lead. <http://insideepa.com/Environmental-Policy-Alert/Environmental-Policy-Alert-12/25/2013/epa-moves-to-settle-dod-challenge-to-stormwater-retention-permits/menu-id-132.html>

Press Releases:

Link to all R7 press releases: <http://go.usa.gov/Qx5>

None

Fact Sheets:

Link to all R7 fact sheets: <http://www.epa.gov/region7/factsheets>

None

Upcoming Administrator/RA Events:

* New additions noted with an asterisk

1/7-8/14 – Joint Region 7/Region 8 Agriculture Meeting, Regional Office, Damon Frizzell, 7560

1/9/14 – National Tribal Operations Committee, Regional Office, (Karl to participate via VTC), Wolfgang Brandner, 7381

1/16/14 – COOP Drill, Kansas City, Mo., Chris Taylor, 7736

1/17/14 – Meet and greet with new HUD Regional Director, Jennifer Tidwell, Regional Office, Kerry Herndon, 7286

1/16/13 – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Training Event, Kansas City, Kan., Greg Davis

2/5/13 – Regional Tribal Operations Committee, Lenexa, Kan., Wolfgang Brandner, 7381

2/20/13 – Air & Waste Management Association Mid-West Chapter Annual Conference, Overland Park, Kan., Becky Weber, 7487

DRA:

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1/9/14 – National Tribal Operations Committee, Regional Office, (Karl to participate via VTC), Wolfgang Brandner, 7381

1/16/14 – COOP Drill, Kansas City, Mo., Chris Taylor, 7736

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RA/Immediate Office

None

Other Events

AWMD

None

CNSL

None

ECO/EJ

None

ENSV

None

PLMG

None

RA/OPA

None

SUPR

None

WWPD

None